



Office of Resolution Management Fiscal Year 2002 Annual Report



Improving Environments To Better
Serve Our Nation's Veterans



Department of Veterans Affairs



Mission

To provide timely and high quality complaint processing, while fostering a discrimination-free work environment through, education, training, prevention, and early resolution.

Motto

Honoring and serving our Nation's Veterans by promoting a discrimination-free environment.

Vision

To be the best in government in the timely and confidential processing of all EEO complaints, while remaining sensitive and compassionate to all we serve. To gain and keep the trust of VA employees and all others touched by our work.



Message from the Deputy Assistant Secretary

How important is it to you to have workplace environments where employees feel valued, productivity increases, and the costs associated with workplace disputes are reduced?

To achieve these objectives, the Office of Resolution Management (ORM) has developed a variety of innovative programs and services that we believe will be helpful in addressing many of the issues affecting the workplace. Our goal is to help create an **Employer of Choice** environment in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) by seeking ways to reduce workplace disputes and by working to bring early resolution to those disputes that do occur.

Among the programs and services available to you are our Customer Service Programs, Stakeholders Council, Alternative Dispute Resolution and Mediation Services, Environmental Assessment Program, and Root Cause Analysis, in addition to our core mission: processing discrimination complaints.

The information in this annual report provides details about these and other activities, as well as our accomplishments during Fiscal Year 2002. We have made great progress in our effort to fulfill ORM's role as a valued resource in VA's quest to become an Employer of Choice and to continue providing the highest quality of service to our Nation's veterans.

James S. Jones

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I. PROGRAM SUMMARY

Fiscal Year 2002 was an exciting year for the Office of Resolution Management (ORM). We achieved **99%** of the objectives outlined in our Integrated Business Plan (IBP) and co-sponsored a highly visible and very well received National Leaders' conference.

ORM's IBP is consistent with several initiatives addressed in the President's **Management Agenda** and is in alignment with VA's Enabling goal: "Create an environment that fosters the delivery of one VA world-class service to veterans and their families through effective communication and management of people, technology, business process, and financial resources." The IBP consists of three objectives designed to address ORM's key business processes:

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and prevention initiatives.

The early resolution of workplace disputes helps employees to get back to serving veterans and reduces the cost of processing EEO complaints.

Recruiting and retaining a diverse and highly competent workforce.

Improving the overall management of the EEO complaint process. This initiative encompasses several components associated with enhancing the efficiency of processing discrimination complaints.

Our goal is to help create an **Employer of Choice** environment in VA through our discrimination complaint processing and value-added services. **Employer of Choice** environments have a positive effect on the bottom-line—improved quality, productivity, cost, effectiveness, employee satisfaction, and customer satisfaction.

To help create an **Employer of Choice** environment, we have developed the following operational model that incorporates four core strategies: **Prevention, Early Intervention or Resolution, Timely Processing** and **Safeguards**.

OPERATIONAL MODEL



II. ORM ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

ORM is currently undergoing a **Service and Resource Alignment (SARA)** to better utilize our resources and improve the delivery of our services. Some of the benefits of SARA are:

- Greater Consistency and Uniformly High Quality of Service
- Improved Cost Effectiveness
- National ORM Perspective
- Seamless Service
- Maximum use of Technology

SARA will help ORM to make effective use of staff while meeting established performance goals and will result in a more efficient operation and greater consistency of service.

Human Resources:

ORM employed 246 employees at the end of FY 2002.

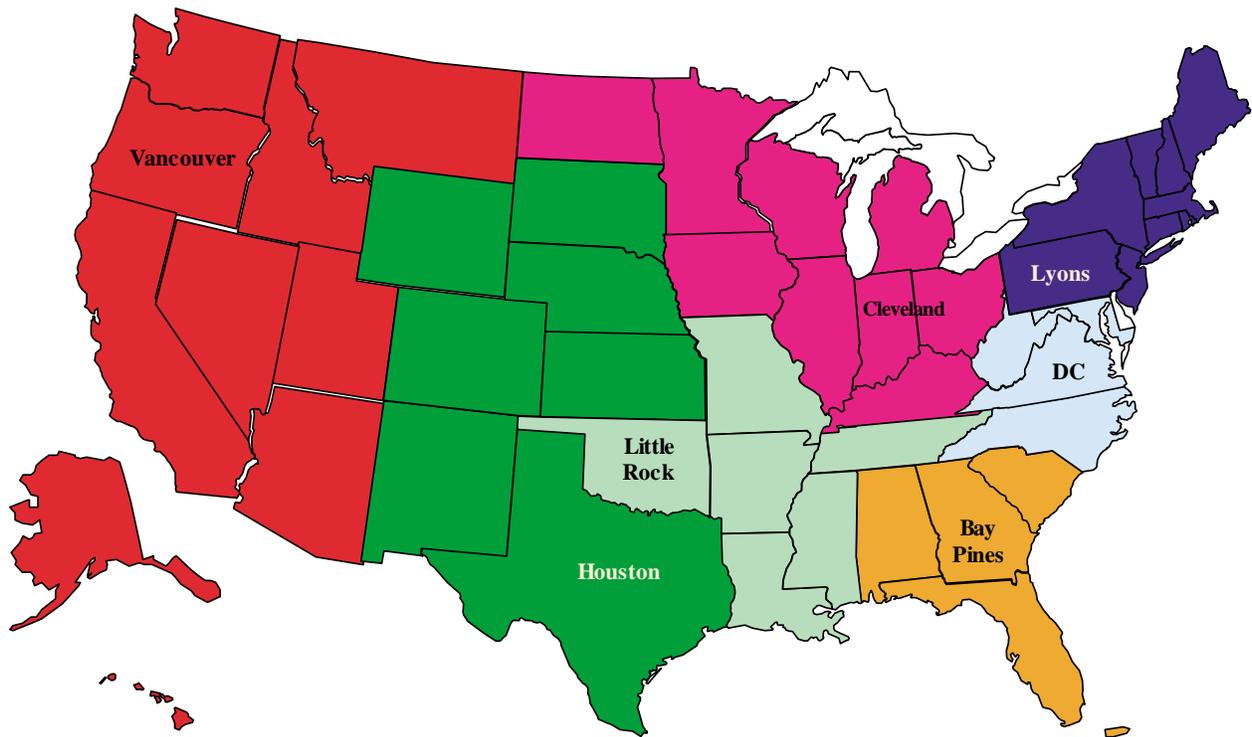
Budget:

Our FY 2002 budget was \$**28.5** million. ORM is a reimbursable organization. These funds are collected by an appropriation transfer from the three VA Administrations - Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), National Cemetery Administration (NCA) – as well as other staff offices, based on complaint activity. Each Administration receives quarterly and annual reports that provide a breakdown of the complaints processed by ORM.

Field Operations

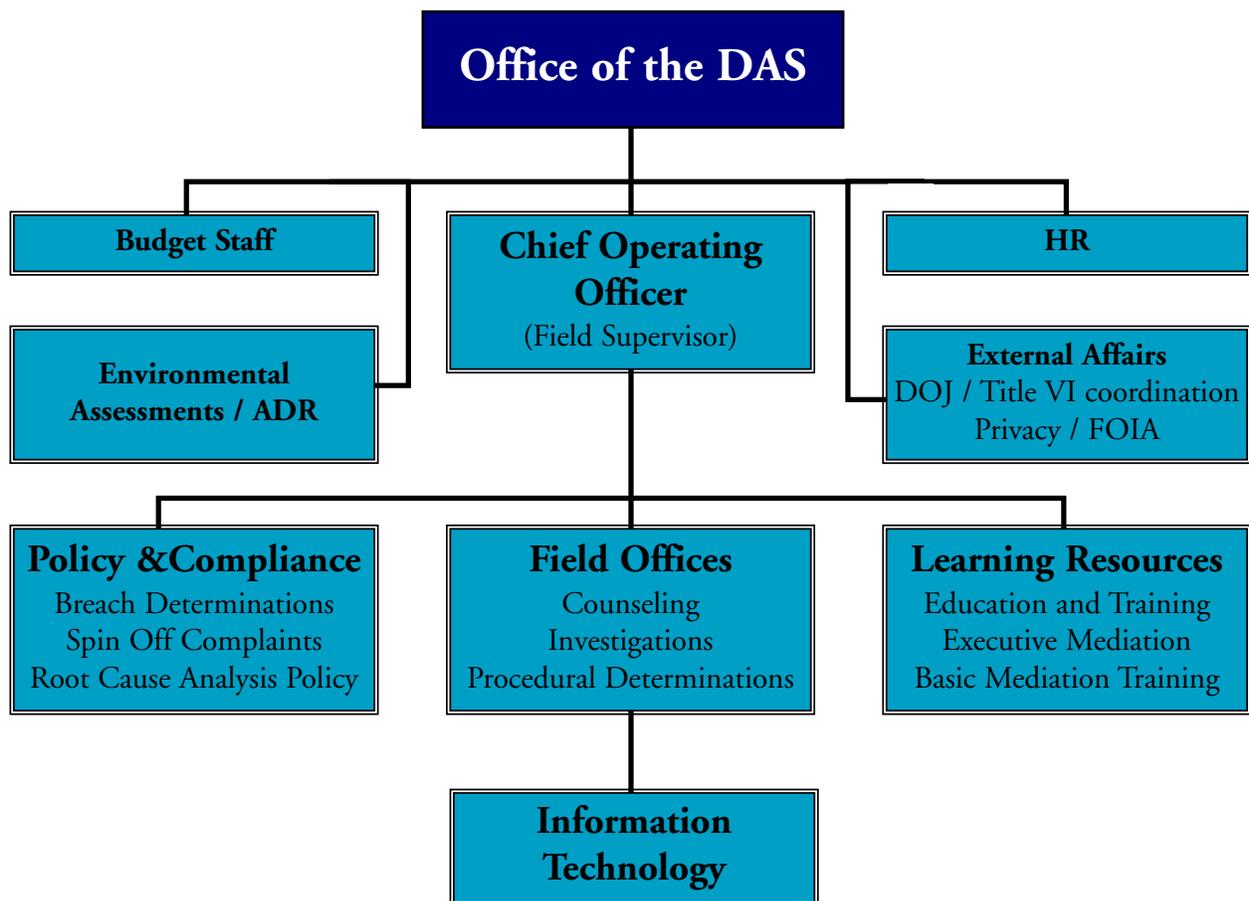
When fully implemented, **SARA** will result in the merger of our field offices, from eleven to seven offices, and more concentration on three program areas: Customer Service, Quality Assurance, and Enterprise programs. SARA will enable ORM to better utilize its resources to provide more efficient service to our customers.

Field and satellite offices process all EEO complaints filed by VA employees, former employees, and applicants for employment. Our field offices also provide direct support and training regarding EEO laws and programs to VA facility directors, EEO managers, and facility employees. They also provide trained mediators to assist VA facilities.



As a result of **SARA**, ORM field offices will now be located in: **Lyons, NY; Washington, DC; Bay Pines, FL; Cleveland, OH; Little Rock, AR; Houston, TX;** and **Vancouver, WA.** Areas of jurisdiction are shown on the accompanying map: With the mergers of field offices we now have 15 satellite offices located throughout the United States: **Hines, IL; Leavenworth, KS; Palo Alto, CA; Los Angeles, CA; Long Beach, CA; Fayetteville, NC; Lake City, FL; Detroit, MI; Amarillo, TX; Denver, CO; St. Louis, MO; Murfreesboro, TN; New York, NY; Bedford, MA; Pittsburg, PA.**

ORM Organizational Chart



III. Programs to Serve our Customers

ORM has an array of customer services and programs designed to support the development of **Employer of Choice** environments in VA. These services and programs are designed to help ORM identify what our customers want and need from us. We also provide tools to:

- help prevent workplace disputes and complaints;
- resolve workplace disputes and complaints as early as possible;
- identify the root causes of complaints; and
- provide threshold information.

CUSTOMER SERVICE PROGRAM

During FY 2002, considerable effort was devoted to improving communication with our stakeholders. This resulted in the creation of the ORM **Customer Service Program**. This program identifies our stakeholders and a variety of opportunities to obtain feedback and share information with our customers. Routinely, ORM solicits feedback from individuals following their involvement in the complaint process. However, under the auspices of the customer service program, ORM took advantage of having direct access to approximately 700 attendees at the National Leaders' conference to conduct a customer satisfaction survey regarding the services provided by ORM. The results of this survey indicated **94% of the responses rated ORM favorably**. Survey participants included representatives from each administration and Central Office staff offices. Plans are underway to automate the distribution, collection, and reporting of customer satisfaction survey information in the future.

STAKEHOLDER'S COUNCIL

Another significant initiative to improve communication with our customers was the creation of the ORM Stakeholder's Council. The Stakeholder's Council consists of representatives from each administration, Office of the General Counsel, Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication (OEDCA), Office of Dispute Resolution, Human Resources, and Office of Policy and Planning. The representatives are from Central Office as well as field facilities. The Council provides an excellent forum for ORM to find out what our customers want and need and also allows us to find out how well we provide services, build relationships, and collaborate on important projects. The first two Council meetings were held in September and December 2002. Future Council meetings will be held quarterly in Washington, DC.

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR)

ORM is committed to the resolution of disputes at the lowest organizational level.

ORM has devoted enormous effort and resources toward promoting the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). Although information regarding ADR is provided to individuals involved in an EEO complaint, there is a critical need to promote the value of ADR to VA managers and other employees not immediately involved in the EEO complaint process.

Whenever opportunities arise, ORM communicates the positive effects early resolution efforts often have on workplace disputes so that, ultimately, employees can concentrate on providing high-quality service to veterans. During FY 2002, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Resolution Management made numerous presentations - to such groups as the 2001 and 2002 Leadership VA classes, the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) National Leadership Board, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Chairperson and the EEOC EXCEL Conference, Regional EEO Conferences and VA field facilities - to underscore the importance of addressing workplace disputes as early as possible.

To ensure VA's compliance with the EEOC requirement to incorporate ADR into the complaint process, ORM's ADR plan is being incorporated into the agency's EEO management directive. During meetings with the Under Secretary for Health and the Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, discussions have focused on the need to assess existing ADR programs and develop strategies for expanding the use of ADR.

We have also developed an ADR/Mediation tracking system to record and monitor ADR/Mediation cases VA-wide. ORM, in conjunction with the VA Office of Alternate Dispute Resolution and Mediation, prepared a workplace conflict guide - ***Workplace Conflict Guide*** - which is available on-line at VA's ADR website <http://www.va.gov/adr/index.htm>.

Mediation Training Courses

During FY 2002, ORM sponsored six executive mediation sessions in Atlanta, Georgia, and trained 116 senior managers. A total of 324 senior executives have received ORM sponsored mediation training since FY 2000. The training included developing basic mediation skills, promoting VA mediation initiatives, and providing information to enable VA executives and managers to market mediation as a means for resolving workplace disputes. A six-hour mediation awareness training session is scheduled for all VA executives and managers in VA Central Office during the first quarter of FY 2003. ORM led the planning and implementation of VA's ADR/Mediation train-the-trainer initiative. Since the beginning of FY 2001, **30** trainers have completed this program and are now qualified to conduct ADR awareness training.

Mediation Training Videos

The Learning Resource Center revised our video, *The Mediation Zone*, which is now used throughout the Department for mediation awareness training and orientation. Copies of this video are available at ORM field offices and copies will be made available to facility ADR coordinators during FY 2003. Facility ADR Coordinators are encouraged to use the video as a marketing tool for their network/facility ADR programs. ORM will also provide brochures and posters to help publicize ADR. Another video, *Coaching the Student Mediator*, focuses on methods for training new mediators. Copies of both videos can be obtained by contacting the Learning Resource Center.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

To identify potential workplace issues, the Organizational Climate Assessment Program (OCAP) provides facility management feedback from employees and supervisors regarding how they perceive their workplace environments. Through meetings with facility management, employee focus groups, and employee surveys, OCAP is able to provide managers with an analysis of systemic issues they may have been unaware of and specific recommendations to address them. During FY 2002, environmental assessments were conducted at two VA medical facilities and one VA regional office.

OCAP promotes improving workplace environments and preventing EEO complaints in VA by encouraging early intervention and resolution. In addition, OCAP assists facilities' efforts to buoy workplace morale, increase productivity, improve communication, and conserve financial resources, all of which enable VA employees and managers to focus on delivering high-quality service to our nation's veterans.

As ORM works to help develop VA's employer of choice strategies, we also devote resources to make sure the concerns and needs of ORM employees are met. In FY 2002 we solicited the services of the Veterans Health Administration's National Center for Organization Development (NCOD) to conduct an environmental assessment survey in ORM, which all ORM employees were asked to complete. The full results of the survey were communicated to our employees and a plan of action is being developed to address issues or concerns raised in the survey.

As part of our initiative to help create and maintain employer of choice environments in VA, ORM has established an **Employer of Choice** award to recognize ORM offices that best exemplify employer of choice work environments. The awards, which are planned for the first quarter of FY 2004, will be based on performance, productivity, employee input, and customer service.

ROOT CAUSES OF COMPLAINTS



ORM, through its Office of Policy and Compliance (OPC), prepares and issues a quarterly root cause analysis report that provides senior VACO officials and field facility directors with information pertaining to issues that surface in the discrimination complaint process, but do not appear to be discriminatory in nature.

This report shows some of the possible reasons behind the filing of discrimination complaints that are not found to be rooted in discrimination.

In Fiscal Year 2002, we made several changes to enhance the effectiveness of our root cause analysis report and will make additional improvements in FY 2003.

The title of the report was changed to ***Root Cause: Preliminary Assessment of the Underlying Causes for Initiating Claims of Discrimination***. The report was expanded to include an analysis of a wider variety of the underlying causes of complaints such as harassment (non-sexual), sexual harassment, working conditions (hostile), and failure to promote. Additional root causes identified using this expanded analysis include:

- Unequal or inconsistent application of rules and regulations;
- Rules or regulations are not established, published, or adequately disseminated, resulting in conflicting interpretations;
- Employer vs. employee value systems differ;
- Personal problems that spill over into the work environment; or
- Resources to accomplish desired results are not available or not appropriately utilized.

The primary root causes consistently identified during FY 2002 as being the underlying causes of complaints were:

- Differences in the value systems of employers and employees
- Conflicting work ethics
- Unequal or inconsistent application of rules by supervisors or among/between employees

The primary bases for complaints were:

- Race
- Reprisal

The primary claim for complaints was:

- Harassment (non-sexual)

Complaint Activity:

- Sexual harassment complaints increased from **1.7%** in 2001, to **2.3%** in FY 2002.
- Disability complaints increased from **11.5%** in 2001, to **12%** in FY 2002.

WEB BASED TRACKING SYSTEM



Statistical data for discrimination complaint processing is maintained in ORM's **Web Based Tracking System (WBTS)**. The WBTS was established to serve as the permanent, nationwide ORM database. The information allows local facility management to have immediate access to complaint data, which can help to identify key issues surrounding conflicts easily. Because data is entered into the system at each stage of the complaint process, field facilities can design internal procedures to try to resolve conflicts as early as possible and pinpoint potential problems.

ORM WEBSITE

We have developed a website that provides comprehensive information on the structure of ORM and the EEO process including:

- How to file a complaint;
- EEO policies and procedures
- Links to other government agencies such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).



You can also find our quarterly newsletter, *Employment Discrimination Complaint Processing Update*, on our website. This newsletter, which provides useful information on EEO matters, is targeted towards facility and EEO managers throughout VA. We also host the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication (OEDCA) "Quarterly Digest" on our website as well as policies and procedures from our Human Resources division. Coming soon will be the ORM Office of Policy and Compliance web page. Our website address is www.va.gov/orm (Internet) or <http://vawww.va.gov/orm> (Intranet).

IV. LEARNING RESOURCES

Office of Resolution Management (ORM) Learning Resources Employee Education, Training, and Development Strategies

ORM embraces the creative approaches employed by today's government and business communities in its education and training strategies, which address two different but equally important fronts: The **internal front** has as its primary objective the delivery of training products that increase the productivity and professional competencies of all ORM employees.

The **external front** focuses on the creation and marketing of awareness initiatives to VA's global culture to promote a greater understanding of EEO discrimination prevention, complaint processing and early resolution.

ORM Internal Front - A key step in building a learning infrastructure is the development of training and education initiatives that focus on the specific information, knowledge, and skill needs of learners.

The Learning Resources internal front consists of training initiatives designed to enhance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of ORM's staff, thereby equipping ORM to process cases at all stages of the EEO Discrimination Complaint Process.

Training Opportunities for ORM EEO Professionals. To ensure ORM has a highly skilled and competent staff, ORM offers structured training for:

- ORM Managers and Supervisors
- Program Assistants
- Counselors/ Intake Specialist
- Investigators

ORM External Front - While it is important that ORM process discrimination complaints fairly and expeditiously, we must also take a proactive approach to prevention and early resolution. We can best achieve these objectives through strategic educational initiatives that target VA's global population.

ORM External Initiatives include:

- Informing Department employees about the discrimination complaint process
- Determining root causes and educating management about how discrimination—real or perceived—affects the agency

- Informing Department employees about the different avenues available to resolve complaints, including ADR.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING DELIVERY

The Office of Resolution Management uses many modalities to deliver training and education to ORM and VA employees. Some of them are:

- Independent Study Program
- Videotape Library
- In-Service Training Courses
- Web-based Distance Learning

Areas covered by this training include:

- EEO Complaint Process
- Mediation Training
- Mediation Awareness for VA Executives
- Leadership, Management, and Supervisory Development



V. FY 2002 VA EEO / CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVITY

EEO COMPLAINT PROCESSING ACTIVITY FACTS and FIGURES

EEOC's FY 2001 Annual Report disclosed that VA is a leader in federal EEO complaint processing. We take great pride in having the best complaint processing times among cabinet level agencies. As an indication of our expertise in this area, ORM partnered with EEOC judges to conduct EEO counselor training for other federal agencies.

Since ORM's inception in 1997, workload demands have fluctuated considerably. During this period, we have improved counseling processing time, eliminated the initial backlog of investigations and provided extensive training for ORM employees. These efforts resulted in improved quality throughout the organization during FY 2002:

- We processed **4,772** counseling events: **95%** took place within **30** days.
- The average counseling time was **26** days. (The EEOC standard is **30** days.)
- 2,514** complaints were resolved in the informal stage; **52%** of the complainants who contacted EEO counselors decided not to file formal complaints.
- 2,258** formal complaints were filed, **5%** more than the **2,129** filed during FY 2001.
- We completed **88%** of the **1,518** investigations conducted during the year within the EEOC standard of **180** days. The other **12%** were completed within **361** days.
- Our average processing time for completing investigations was **202** days. **Our goal for FY 2003 is to average 180 or less days for completion of investigations.**
- We processed **2,270** procedural reviews. The average processing time was **54** days, compared to **73.3** days in FY 2001.

SAFEGUARDS, INTEGRITY and TRUST

ORM's **Office of Policy and Compliance (OPC)** reviews and prepares final agency decisions on all VA Breach of Settlement Agreement claims. OPC monitors compliance with final agency decisions issued by the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication (OEDCA) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). It also conducts age discrimination and compensatory damage investigations; oversees investigations of complex and high-visibility cases; prepares responses to Congressional inquiries; and issues decisions on claims of dissatisfaction with the EEO process.

OPC prepares two quarterly reports:

- ❑ Our root cause analysis report, ***Root Cause: Preliminary Assessment of the Underlying Causes for Initiating Claims of Discrimination;***
- ❑ The ***Senior Manager's Report*** summarizes the employment discrimination complaints filed against senior VA managers and identifies the most prevalent issues and bases for these complaints. This report, mandated by Public Law 105-114, is submitted to the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs.

During FY 2002, OPC presented a satellite broadcast, ***Settlement Agreements***. This broadcast dealt with common mistakes in writing settlement agreements. These mistakes can result in vaguely worded agreements that are unenforceable. The broadcast also provided tips on how to correct these problems.

CIVIL RIGHTS



ORM coordinates with the U.S. Department of Justice and the three VA Administrations to ensure compliance with civil rights statutes designed to ensure equal access to Federally assisted and conducted programs and activities. This coordination involves the administration of ***Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973,*** and the ***Age Discrimination Act.***

These civil rights acts prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in programs and activities that are supported by Federal financial assistance.

Also referred to as the External Civil Rights Program, it includes the coordination, preparation, and implementation of VA's guidance for:

- ❑ ***Executive Order 13160, Non-Discrimination in Federally Conducted Education and Training***, which prohibits discrimination in education and training programs conducted by Federal Agencies.
- ❑ ***Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)***, which requires Federal agencies to ensure that individuals are not barred from participating in VA programs and activities because of limited English proficiency.
- ❑ ***Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act***, which requires Federal departments and agencies to ensure that employees and members of the public with disabilities have access to and use of information and data, comparable to that of persons without disabilities – unless it is an undue burden to do so. This information and data may then be provided by an alternate means.

VI. SPECIAL PROGRAMS

VA's NATIONAL LEADERS' CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

“Shaping the Future”

Cultivating a Dynamic and Dedicated Workforce through Excellence in

Human Resources, Diversity, and Equal Employment Opportunity

Shaping the Future was theme of the National Leaders' Conference held at the Marriott Marquis Hotel, in Atlanta, Georgia, July 16 - July 18, 2002. ORM co-sponsored the event, along with two other divisions from Human Resources and Administration (Human Resources Management and Diversity Management & EEO). ORM's Learning Resources (ORMLR) staff served as the principal designers and coordinators of the conference. The goal of the conference was to leverage the diverse talents and backgrounds of VA Leaders, enabling VA to create and maintain **Employer of Choice** environments.

The conference was rated “highly successful” by more than 95% of the 700 participants based on a post-conference survey. Participants included:

- Executives from the Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration and the National Cemetery Administration
- VA Human Resources Directors
- EEO Professionals
- Labor union representatives.

This conference was created to:

- Discuss the challenges of VA leaders in the areas of diversity, human resources and equal employment opportunity.
- Provide tools to deal more effectively with conflict and diversity issues.
- Help executives re-channel negative instances of workplace grievances into positive utilization of agency resources, which ultimately will result in the best possible service to our nation's veterans and their families.

Highlights of the National Leaders' Conference



The conference opened with a video message from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Anthony J. Principi, in which he stated unequivocally that “one finding of intentional discrimination is too many.” The Secretary also expressed the conviction that the conference would take us closer to a better future for all our Nation’s veterans”...tomorrow’s leadership begins today.”

Mr. Principi stressed the importance of doing things in human resources, diversity and equal employment opportunity to make sure that employees’ needs are met and that we continue striving to achieve an environment within VA where veterans receive the highest level of service.



Leo S. MacKay, Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs, spoke on “Shaping the Future: Our Challenge. During his address he stated “...it’s VA’s quality work force that drives our quality programs and services. People are the measure of our Department’s self worth and will always hold the key to our success.”



Nora Egan, Chief of Staff, delivered the opening day keynote address. She spoke on the challenge that faces VA to maintain an effective workforce. She emphasized the importance of using available resources to address issues on the front end before they become EEO matters.



Jacob Lozada, Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration, spoke on the topics: “Shaping the Future: Our Challenge and Where Do We Go From Here.”



Tim McClain, General Counsel, addressed: “Reducing EEO Complaints: A Collaborative Effort.”

Participants attended a selection of the 64 workshops offered during the conference. Workshops were chosen in advance by each participant according to their interest. Subject matter experts from within and outside the agency served as instructors for these workshops. Workshops designed specifically for the needs and interest of executives were also offered. Course offerings included: “Diversity Issues”; “Impact on Operations”; “How to Survive an EEO Complaint”; “Enlightened Leadership”; “Labor Relations for VA Executives”; and “Preventing Workplace Stress and Aggression.”

Panel discussions were held on: “Human Resources and Diversity Program Expectations” and “Understanding the President’s Management Agenda.” Panel participants included Dr. Lozada and other senior VA officials.

Guest speakers included: Stephen M. Gower, CEO, the Gower Group, “What People See When They See You Coming”; Cynthia Butler-Blucher, Vice President, Jefferson Parrish School District, “Accepting the Responsibility”; Michele Hunt, “Dream Makers: Putting Vision and Values to Work”; Martin Luther King, III, “Changing the Global Culture”; and Doug Krug, co-Author, “Enlightened Leadership: Getting to the Heart of Change.”



Stephen M. Gower
“What People See When
They See You Coming”



Cynthia Butler-Blucher
“Accepting the
Responsibility”



Martin Luther King III
“Changing the Global Culture”



Michele Hunt
“Dream Makers: Putting Vision
and Values to Work”

During the conference employees were recognized for their leadership and support in:

- ❑ Promoting Alternative Dispute Resolution (Pioneer Award)
Recipients: Guy McMichael; Patricia Sheridan; Fred Conway.
- ❑ Training and Developing New Mediators (Pace Setter Award)
Recipients: J. Sidney Davis, Ph.D.; Gayle Sipes, J.D.;
Earl Parsons, J.D.; Kathleen Binder, J.D.; Sue Meyer, J.D.; and
Naomi Sweeting.
- ❑ Developing and Producing the VA Mediation Handbook (Outstanding Achievement)
Recipients: Timothy May; Steve Becker; David Cox; Susan Cox; Gus Guerra; Carl Hensley;
II, Elaine Marshall; Ada Neale; Jane Nygaard; Patricia Sheridan; Joe Simon; Naomi
Sweeting; Janet Thompson; and Tom Wall.



Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration,
Dr. Jacob Lozada and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management,
Mr. James Jones, with recipients of the Pace Setter Award



Dr. Lozada and Mr. Jones with recipients of the
Outstanding Achievement Award

SCENES FROM A SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE



Opening Ceremonies



Registration



Conference Participants

VII. CLOSING REMARKS

We have just completed a very challenging, but productive year, during which we were recognized as a leader in federal sector EEO complaint processing. We are meeting or exceeding EEOC mandated timeliness standards for processing complaints. We successfully co-sponsored the first National Leaders' Conference, launched our Organizational Climate Assessment Program (OCAP), and expanded our mediation efforts within VA. We also made strides in becoming a more effective and efficient organization through SARA.

Our success in being recognized as an important resource to the Department is the result of teamwork, dedication, and the ability to adapt to our changing role as we strive to meet and exceed the expectations of our stakeholders.

We will continue to build upon the strong foundation we have laid by identifying areas where we can improve our services and add value to VA. We have already begun by initiating our organizational realignment to better utilize our resources and improve the services we provide.

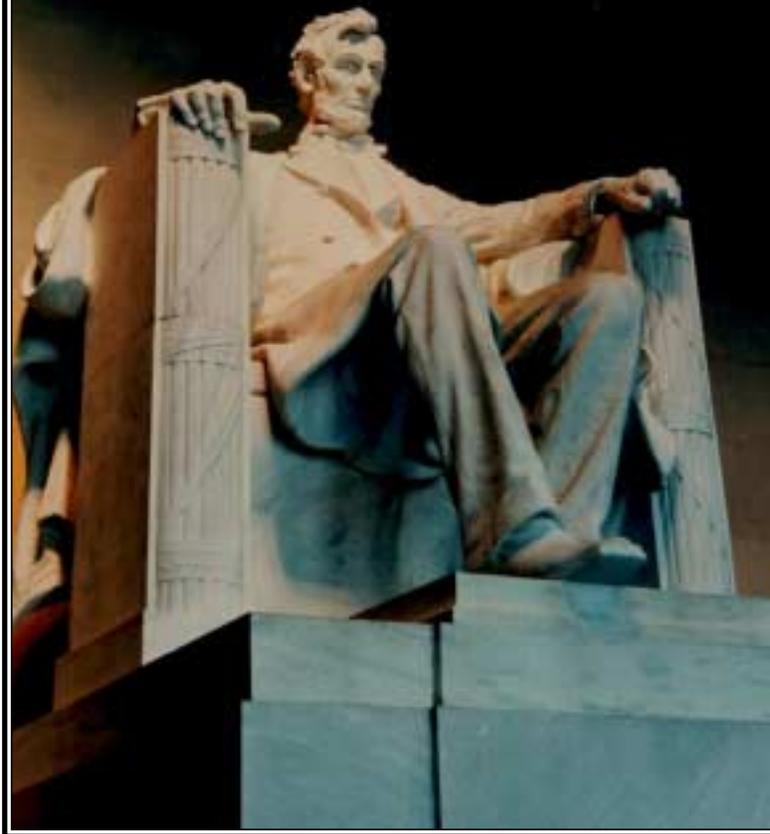
Success is the result of continuously striving to be the best. It requires commitment, hard work, adaptability, and a steadfast focus on our mission:

To provide timely and high quality complaint processing and promote a discrimination-free work environment through education, training, prevention, and early resolution.

I welcome your comments on this annual report, the services that we currently provide, and the services you believe will help us to fulfill our mission.

James S. Jones
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Resolution Management

*... to care for him who shall
have borne the battle and
for his widow and his orphan ...
A. Lincoln*



Improving Environments to Better Serve Our Nation's Veterans



Department of Veterans Affairs